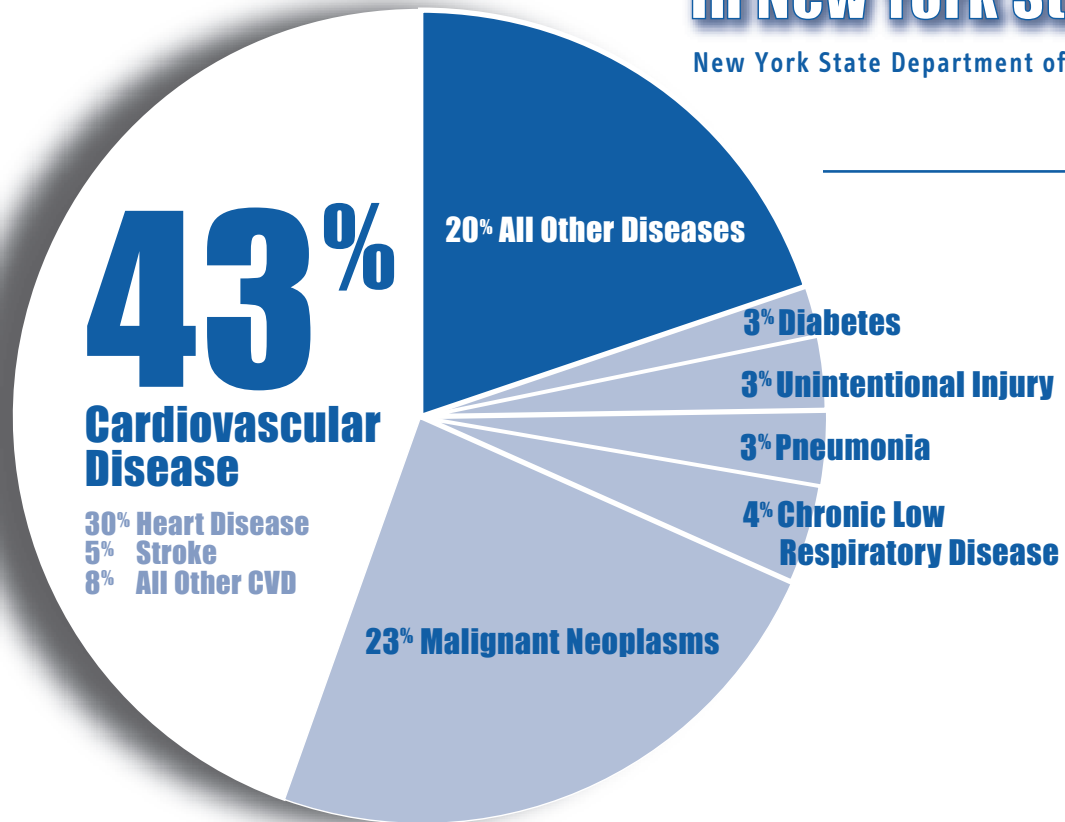




Cardiovascular Health in New York State

New York State Department of Health



Cardiovascular Disease: New York's Leading Killer

Among both men and women, and across all racial and ethnic groups, cardiovascular disease is New York's leading killer. In 2002, more than 67,700 New Yorkers died of cardiovascular disease, accounting for 43% of all deaths. New York ranks first in the Nation in deaths due to ischemic heart disease.

Cardiovascular Disease: Addressing the State's Leading Cause of Death

Cardiovascular disease (CVD), specifically heart disease and stroke, kills more New Yorkers than any other condition. In 2000, CVD caused more deaths than all cancers and HIV/AIDS combined. Among both men and women and across all racial and ethnic groups, CVD is New York's leading killer. There is a common misconception that heart disease is mainly a problem for men. While the premature mortality rate is higher in men, more women than men have died from heart disease in every year since 1984 and this trend is increasing. New York ranks 16th in the United States in age-adjusted deaths due to CVD. In 2002, the estimated direct (medical care) and indirect (lost productivity) cost of cardiovascular disease in New York was almost \$16 billion. This is approximately \$860 for each person in New York.

The health burden of CVD is matched by its economic burden. More than 20,000 coronary artery bypass surgeries are performed each year in the state, with a mean cost of approximately \$32,000. A person with heart disease has substantial medical expenses for diagnostic tests, surgeries, hospital and doctor visits, physical therapy and drugs. A conservative estimate of the cost of treating one person with heart disease over 20 years is \$121,200. For those needing special procedures and on-going care, the costs can be more than \$4.8 million over a lifetime (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). The use of advanced surgeries and new treatments, while often effective in delaying death from CVD,



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

will continue to increase the financial impact of the disease in the years ahead. The personal pain and suffering caused by CVD to New Yorkers and its impact on families is beyond measure.

Despite these facts, there is good news in New York State (NYS). Public attention to heart disease and stroke has grown steadily over the past decade. There is clarity about risk factors for CVD and stroke and how individuals and communities can lower their risks. The NYS Health Department and a network of partner agencies and colleagues around the state are making significant progress in reducing CVD risk factors. Our aim is to decrease tobacco use, increase daily physical activity, increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk, and reduce high blood pressure.

“The best way to fight cardiovascular *disease* is by promoting cardiovascular *health*”

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr. P.H.
New York State Commissioner of Health

Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors

High Blood Pressure and Cholesterol

High blood pressure, defined as blood pressure over 140/90 mm Hg, increases the risk of CVD, especially when other risk factors are present. A new classification of elevated blood pressure has been introduced - “prehypertension” - and is defined as systolic pressure between 120-139 mm Hg and diastolic pressure between 80 and 90 mm Hg. People with prehypertension are at greater risk of developing hypertension than people who have lower blood pressures. High blood pressure increases the heart’s workload, causing it to enlarge and weaken. Twenty-four percent of adult New Yorkers have been told more than once that their blood pressure is high. Similarly, elevated blood cholesterol, defined as a total blood cholesterol level of 200 mg/dL or greater or a low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol of 100 mg/dL or greater, indicates a high risk for heart disease in middle-aged adults. More than one-quarter of New Yorkers have been diagnosed with elevated blood cholesterol.

Lack of Physical Activity

Physical activity reduces the risk of dying from heart disease and provides protection against other chronic diseases and

conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, colon cancer and osteoporosis. Physical activity also helps reduce blood pressure in people with high blood pressure. More than 30% of New Yorkers do not engage in any leisure-time physical activity; 80% do not meet current recommendations for moderate physical activity. Physical activity decreases with age and is less frequent among women than men, among individuals with lower incomes and among those with less education.

Poor Nutrition

Eating well can reduce one’s risk of many chronic diseases; heart disease is no exception. One result of poor nutrition, coupled with inactivity, is the risk of overweight. More than 56% of New Yorkers are overweight based on self-reports of height and weight. The overweight rate among children ages 8 through 16 has tripled in one generation. Obesity is a major risk factor for many diseases, including heart disease.

In addition to amounts, the types of foods consumed can affect health. Seventy-five percent of the adult population reports eating fewer than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Fruits and vegetables are a great source of fiber, many vitamins, and other health-protective nutrients. Eating 8 – 10 servings of fruits and vegetables and three servings of low-fat dairy foods a day has been shown to decrease blood pressure. Only 30% of the milk sold in NYS is fat-free or 1% (low-fat), and milk fat is the third largest contributor of saturated fat in adults’ diets and first in children’s.

Tobacco Use

Cigarette smoking is the major cause of heart disease among men and women, with 30% of all heart disease deaths attributed to smoking. Smokers have twice the risk of heart attack than nonsmokers. Approximately one-fourth of New York adults and 22% of adolescents smoke cigarettes.

NYS Healthy Heart Program: Innovator for the Nation

For more than 20 years, the NYS Healthy Heart Program (HHP) has promoted the heart health of residents. Primary attention is given to making it easier for New Yorkers to eat well, be active and be tobacco-free. Funds are provided to local communities to conduct physical activity and nutrition interventions in schools, worksites and the community, and to ensure people receive appropriate health care for risk factors for cardiovascular disease. In 2004, the State Health Department released a comprehensive plan to address cardiovascular disease: “Cardiovascular Health in New York State: A Plan for 2004 – 2010.” It has 19 objectives to promote healthier behaviors, further enhance the quality of care and reduce known disease risks. The plan promotes interventions in four sectors: communities, schools, worksites, and health care settings.



Where We Live:



Expanding opportunities for heart healthy choices in communities is the cornerstone of the HHP. Local Healthy Heart programs involve more than 1,000 organizations in wellness-related activities. County health departments, educational institutions, community-based organizations, wellness councils and faith-based organizations lead this work.

The local Healthy Heart programs have implemented many interventions to increase opportunities for physical activity and eating well. Some examples are:

- creating walking and bicycle trails;
- opening schools for physical activity use by residents before and after school hours;
- increasing physical activity options in after-school programs;
- producing radio and television shows on heart health;
- establishing and promoting farmers markets; and
- changing menu selections in local restaurants.

More than 1,500 community changes like these have been established around the state.

Where We Work



About 60% of adults work and spend much of their day at the worksite. To help employees incorporate physical activity and healthy eating into their daily work routines, the HHP funds local agencies to conduct worksite wellness interventions across the state. Since it began addressing worksite wellness, the HHP has reached almost 300,000 employees in over 1000 worksites. A key tool in the worksite wellness programs is Heart Check – a survey developed by the NYS HHP to assess environmental and policy supports for heart healthy behaviors. The funded agencies conduct the Heart Check survey in worksites and then tailor the interventions based on the results. The interventions create and modify policies, change the environment and provide services to help employees be more active and eat well. Successful environmental and policy changes include:

- new programs and facilities for physical activity during the workday (e.g., stretching class at lunch, exercise room on-site);
- subsidies for health club membership;
- healthful food options in vending machines, cafeterias and at company events;
- walking groups;
- smoke-free environments, and
- farmers markets at the worksite.

Many employers are interested in employee health, but do not have the time and resources to develop programs. To help employers promote physical activity, the HHP developed the

Move for Life! kit. Move for Life! is an 8 – 10 week physical activity promotion program. It's based on a successful campaign used by the State Health Department to encourage its own employees to be active. The kit contains all the materials necessary to launch the program, including directions for implementation, tracking sheets, and promotional materials. The Move for Life! kit is available on-line at www.move4life.org.



Where and What We Eat Restaurants



The average American eats 4.2 meals out a week. The Just Ask Us! Campaign helps people make more healthful choices when eating away from home. As part of the campaign, restaurant servers suggest a healthful modification that customers can request. These modifications include low-fat salad dressing, no-added salt, broiled rather than fried entrees and double vegetables with half the meat in dishes.

Vegetables and Fruits

The 5 A Day -- for Better Health Program was developed in 1991 as a partnership between the National Cancer Institute and the Produce for Better Health Foundation. This program has been successful in increasing both the awareness of the health benefits of fruits and vegetables and their consumption. The HHP promotes fruit and vegetable consumption through establishing farmers markets, creating fruit clubs at worksites, developing community gardens and encouraging people to participate in community-supported agriculture.



Low-fat Milk

Milk fat is the third largest source of saturated fat in adults' diets. Simply switching from whole to fat-free (skim) milk would bring the average adult New Yorker within the recommended guidelines for saturated fat intake.



The HHP promotes low-fat and fat-free milk for people over the age of two years through media campaigns and community-based activities. The 1% or Less media campaign has been a joint effort between public health and the dairy industry, and has been conducted in three major media markets. The media campaign consists primarily of six to nine weeks of paid television and radio commercials and taste testing in various community settings. The campaign was designed to address high consumption of high-fat milk, low consumption of calcium, and declining milk sales. The result is an increase in low fat and overall milk sales.



Where We Walk

Walking is the easiest form of physical activity for most people. Regular walking has been shown to have significant health benefits. Unfortunately, many communities do not have places where people of all ages and abilities can safely and comfortably walk – for recreation or as a way of getting to school or work or doing short errands. The HHP is working with numerous state and local partners to help communities become more “walkable.” Local Healthy Heart programs have helped gain support for sidewalks, community trails, and other improvements that make it easier and safer for residents to walk. Through conferences, training workshops and videoconferences, local elected officials, planners and citizens are taught how to make their communities more walkable.

Where We Receive Health Care

Physicians and other health professionals have a unique and important role to play in the fight against heart disease and stroke. The evidence is clear that people advised by their doctors to be active or eat more healthfully are more likely to do so. The HHP is working to help health care professionals learn the skills needed to counsel patients effectively.

When a patient is identified as having heart disease, the standards of care developed by the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiologists should be followed. The HHP helps hospitals, health care organizations and physicians’ offices develop systems that make following those standards easier.

Many women don’t realize that heart disease is the number one killer of all adults, including women. The HHP is partnering with physicians’ professional groups to increase awareness and screening of women for cardiovascular disease risk factors. Through this partnership, more women are screened for identified cardiovascular disease risk factors and receive appropriate treatment and follow-up care.

Targeting Tobacco Use in New York

In addition to significant state funding, New York receives a comprehensive grant from the CDC to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use in the state. Funding supports the implementation of fundamental programs to reduce tobacco use and are specifically designed to reach those most at risk, including young people, members of racial and ethnic minority groups, women and people with low socioeconomic status. In addition, New York is also funding a statewide media campaign; partnerships with local governments to ensure retailers are not selling tobacco products to minors; and local youth oriented partnerships; and a quit line 1-866-697-8487.



To learn more about the

New York State Healthy Heart Program

and strategies to promote cardiovascular health contact:

New York State
Healthy Heart Program
NYS Department of Health
150 Broadway, 3W
Albany, NY 12204-0676

(518) 474-6683
hhp@health.state.ny.us
See www.health.state.ny.us
for a list of funded programs and
resource materials.